

- 1053102-11331
1. An automated process for producing a medical test implement comprising the steps of:  
providing a first material;  
providing a second material;  
heating the second material to a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time;  
mechanically mating the second material to the first material;  
detaching an amount of the first material to form a handle element of the medical test implement; and  
detaching a sufficient amount of the second material to form a test element of the medical test implement such that the deformable test element will deform when a predetermined load is applied thereto.
  2. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined temperature and predetermined time are selected to allow for elimination of substantially all curvature of the deformable test element during the step of heating the second material.
  3. The method of claim 2, wherein the predetermined temperature is in the range of about 250°F and 350°F.
  4. The method of claim 2, wherein the predetermined time is in the range of about 20 seconds and 40 seconds.
  5. The method of claim 1, wherein the detached amount of the second material has a length of between 37 millimeters and 39 millimeters.
  6. The method of claim 1, wherein the second material has a diameter in the range of about 0.4 millimeters and 0.5 millimeters.
  7. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material has a width in the range of about 20 millimeters and 30 millimeters.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material has a length in the range of about 40 millimeters and 50 millimeters.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material is selected from the group consisting of cardboard, paperboard, a composite material and a plastic material.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the plastic material is selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene, nylon, etc.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the second material is a plastic material.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein the plastic material is nylon.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the test element deforms when a load of approximately 10 grams is applied axially thereto.
14. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
verifying whether the deformable test element deforms in response to the application of a predetermined load thereto.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing a first material includes the steps of:  
providing a sheet of the first material;  
scoring the sheet at a first position along the sheet such that a score line is created that divides the sheet lengthwise into a first portion and a second portion; and  
folding the first portion toward the second portion.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of mechanically mating the second material to the first material further comprises the steps of:

using a machine to place the deformable test element at a selected point between the first and second portions of the material; and  
sealing the first and second portions of the material.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of:

coating at least a portion of one of the first and second portions of the material with an adhesive prior to the step of sealing the first and second portions of the material.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the first material has been pre-treated with a thermosensitive adhesive that is activated by the step of heating the first material via a heat/seal press to a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time and a precise amount of pressure that facilitates sealing of the first and second portions of the material.